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AUTHOR Bouldin, Arthur L.; Lucas, Robert E.
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ABSTRACT

The all black, economically disadvantaged city of Lincoln Heights adjoins the Princeton school district. In February of 1970, the Ohio State Department of Education, after making several inspections of the Lincoln Heights Schools, revoked their charter and ordered them closed. After a series of meetings with three adjoining school districts, the State Board of Education transferred the Lincoln Heights District, with its enrollment of about 1900 black students, into the Princeton City School District. Two weeks after the transfer, approximately 175 black students and 40 parents staged a sit-in at Princeton High School. The superintendent of Princeton immediately established an Advisory Committee of blacks and whites representing every community in the Princeton School District. A three-year phase-in program was developed by the Advisory Committee and the Princeton staff, approved by the Board of Education and given wide publicity. With a superb effort during the 1970-71 school year, the people of the Princeton District far exceeded this first phase-in plan. The Board of Education announced in February, 1971, a two year step-up in the phase-in process to be effective September 1, 1971. There was no overt opposition to this plan. (Authors/JM)

intergroup
University of California, Riverside 92502

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THE PRINCETON PLAN: BEYOND THE STATISTICS[1]

Beyond the impressive statistics of the addition of 1900 Black students in one year, the transfer of $33,700 to the tax base and the opening of a new multimillion dollar intermediate school lies the Princeton commitment to provide the highest quality of academic education for all of its students.

The Princeton commitment is to students as individuals and the determination to make the term quality integrated education *synonymous with excellence in education. Focusing on* prevention *of educational deficiencies, this district has continued its standard of excellence with an enlarged student body.*

As Superintendent Lucas points out in the feature article, "troubled times" might lie ahead but the educational and human goals will remain the same.

With the recent Detroit Public Schools' court decision on de facto segregation, the Princeton School District attendance model, embracing an enlarged student body coming from several municipalities, might well be the model of the future.

Uncommonly blessed with keen leadership, enlightened and intelligent citizens willing to support their commitment with tax dollars, Princeton will continue to* look beyond statistics *to the development of adults equipped and determined to make meaningful contributions to society.*

A. L. B.

**On May 4, 1971, the citizens of the enlarged Princeton School District gave overwhelming support and passed with a comfortable margin a 9.24 mills operating levy.*

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[1]This editorial, written by Arthur L. Bouldin, Chief, O.E.E.O., Editor of Mini Journal, and the following article are reprinted from the Ohio Department of Education Office of Equal Educational Opportunity Mini Journal, Volume 4, Number 1, December, 1971.

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Featured Article

PRINCETON'S INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN PROVIDES NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

By Dr. Robert E. Lucas[1]

The Princeton Schools were born in conflict, a consolidation of eight districts put together eighteen years ago by the Hamilton County Board of Education against the wishes of many citizens in the community. Court action was started immediately to prevent the consolidation. After two years of litigation, the Ohio Supreme Court mandated that the district remain together.

There is no city by the name of Princeton, only a telephone exchange and a road. The original district was composed of one city (Sharonville) and four villages (Evendale, Springdale, Glendale and Woodlawn). The district encompassed 35 square miles in three counties and four townships and a population of approximately 40,000, with the rich industrial valley cutting through the heart of the area. The people represented a cross section of all economic, social, racial and religious backgrounds. The school population in the 1969-70 school year was about 12 percent black. The entire student enrollment had grown from about 2000 to almost 9000 from 1955 to 1970.

Adjoining the Princeton district to the south is the City of Lincoln Heights, It is an all black city, void of any industry. Thus, the city and the school faced impossible financial problems. Part of the city is a low-income housing area, with an estimated 35 to 40 percent of the population receiving public assistance. The crime rate is high and other problems of a related nature are present, as in most areas like this.

In February of 1970, the Ohio State Department of Education, after making several inspections of the Lincoln Heights Schools, revoked their charter and ordered them closed as of July of the same year. After a series of meetings with three adjoining school districts, the State Board of Education transferred the Lincoln Heights District, with its enrollment of about 1900 black students, into the Princeton City School District.

This action created a district that now has a black student population of approximately 28 percent. The Board also transferred approximately $33,700,000 worth of industrial property from the neighboring Lockland School District to the Princeton District, which helped to keep the tax base at nearly the same ratio per child as Princeton had before. The citizens of the original Princeton District had no vote or any say in the matter.

On the evening of February 9, the same day the State Board made the transfer, the Princeton Board of Education met and adopted the following resolution, giving it wide publicity throughout the district:

> WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has, of this date, directed the Lincoln Heights school system be made a part of the Princeton City School District;
> THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we accept the challenge of this responsibility and that the Lincoln Heights School Community be brought into full membership in the Princeton School District;
> AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that every effort be made to move ahead immediately to insure that all children of the expanded district be afforded the best educational opportunities available;
> AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Dr. Robert Lucas and his staff be directed to utilize all resources and talents to provide all children of the enlarged school district the same high educational opportunities Princeton children have enjoyed since the inception of the district.

Two weeks after the transfer, approximately 175 black students and 40 parents staged a sit-in at Princeton High School. The sit-in was both a protest against the transfer and a protest for certain demands against some Princeton school officials.

Most of the demands of the students and parents had been made before but changes

[1]Dr. Lucas is Superintendent of the Princeton City School District in Southwestern Ohio.

made were not apparent to those participating in the sit-in. The immediate reaction in the Princeton School District was one of shock, fear and frantic striving to know what had happened to their school. With the sit-in, the news media stories which followed, the many telephone calls, the wild rumors and false stories, a great polarization took place. Both black and white parents in the Princeton District were afraid that the transfer would destroy the Princeton schools. They were concerned for the safety of their children and that the academic standards of the school would be lowered.

The Princeton Board of Education and the administrative staff, along with the Lincoln Heights Board and staff, met the issues head on with positive and definite action. The Lincoln Heights Board members and the superintendent committed themselves to utilizing every possible means of bringing about a smooth transfer.

The superintendent of Princeton immediately established an Advisory Committee of blacks and whites representing every community in the Princeton School District. Persons who were both pro and con on the merger helped develop a well designed and organized plan. The superintendent of Lincoln Heights, Mr. Willis Holloway and a black principal from the Princeton School District, Mrs. Helen P. Jones, were named co-ordinators of the transfer.

Meetings were held in which all patrons of the two communities were given the opportunity to air their feelings, to express themselves and their concerns and have their questions answered. High school students were involved in many discussions which gave them a chance to express themselves in regard to the transfer.

In spite of the fact that the academic level of the Lincoln Heights students was, on the average, several years below that of the Princeton students due to their backgrounds and years of deprived educational conditions, assurances were given that the academic standards of the Princeton schools would not be lowered. Also, assurances were given that proper compensatory education programs would be provided for those who needed them and plans would be started immediately to prevent other youngsters from falling behind.

A three-year phase-in program was developed by the Advisory Committee and the Princeton staff, approved by the Board of Education and given wide publicity throughout the community. The following are several of the major elements of the phase-in plan:

All school staffs in the new Princeton School District would be desegregated beginning with the 1970-71 school year. The administrative and supervisory staff of the Lincoln Heights District were given assurances they would have positions in the new district that were at least on the same level or above that which they had previously held.

All students in the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades of the two districts would be put together immediately. The Lincoln Heights High School grades 10, 11 and 12 would become a part of the Princeton High School even though space was not available in the main campus building to bring all of them to that facility the first year. In other words, most of their classes would be held in the former Lincoln Heights High School but they would have the integrated Princeton High School staff; those who needed special laboratory classes not available at Lincoln Heights would be transported to the Princeton High School. All Lincoln Heights high school students would have the same opportunity to participate in all extracurricular activities with the original Princeton students; that is, the athletic teams, bands, dramatic productions, debate and clubs were organized as one single high school.

Due to the crowded situation, the Princeton High School would operate on a two period overlap with the 11th and 12th grades starting at 7:45 and ending at 2:30, and the 9th and

10th grades starting at 9:45 and ending at 4:30.

There would be a single high school staff under the direction of the principal, Dr. Donald V. Johnson, with Mr. Edward Starr, former principal of Lincoln Heights, serving as associate principal.

Early start and other similar extended programs were extended to include all youngsters in the Lincoln Heights community.

All textbooks, library materials, audio-visual aides and other materials were brought into line with the quantity and quality of the original Princeton District.

All federal programs of the two districts were administered as a single unit.

All staff members of the enlarged district became involved immediately in extensive in-service workshops and students and parents in all communities were involved in an orientation program.

The accounting and business operations of the Lincoln Heights School District were transferred to the Princeton Board of Education.

All nursing and social work services were brought under the direction of the Princeton Schools and expanded to the entire district.

Special motivational reading and mathematics laboratories were established and a learning center was set up in the Lincoln Heights elementary building.

All Lincoln Heights students in grades kindergarten through six would continue in the Lincoln Heights building through the 1970-71 school year.

With a superb effort during the 1970-71 school year the people of the Princeton District far exceeded this first phase-in plan. The Board of Education announced in February, 1971 a two year step-up in the phase-in process to be effective September 1, 1971. There was no overt opposition to this accelerated phase-in process. The plan, in essence, called for all students to be fully integrated from the sixth grade through the twelfth grade in September of 1971. The 2250 students in grades 10 through 12 were assigned to the Princeton High School and all the students in grades 7, 8 and 9 to the Princeton Junior School. Both the staff and students were fully desegregated.

At the beginning of the 1971-72 school year, there were approximately 2600 students in the Junior High School, which was built to house only 2200 students. The former Lincoln Heights and the Woodlawn-Wayne buildings were set up as laboratory buildings.

The ninth grade students, fully integrated, are meeting one-half day in the Princeton Junior High School and one-half day at the former Lincoln Heights High School. They are enrolled in laboratory classes in home economics, industrial arts, science, career orientation and physical education. The eighth grade students attend classes part of the day in the Woodlawn-Wayne building where industrial arts and home economics facilities are located.

The sixth grade students from Lincoln Heights joined with the all-white students of Sharonville School, the Runyan-Stewart area fourth, fifth and sixth grade students, and the Woodlawn fourth, fifth and sixth grade students to attend a fully integrated intermediate school. This is the new Robert E. Lucas Intermediate School which now houses approximately 900 students, completely open, with team teaching, learning centers and many modern conditions for learning.

In the short period of a year and a half, literally hundreds of things have been done to help bring about a smooth transfer and to move ahead, step by step, to desegregate and fully integrate the enlarged Princeton School District. Thousands of people, including students, staff members and others have been involved. The following is a listing of a few of the things that have taken place:

Examples of Staff Activities

There has been a complete desegregation of all staff in the Princeton Schools. Several black and white teachers have volunteered to change building assignments in order to better desegregate the teaching staffs.

Several weekend workshops were conducted for all administrators and supervisors. These dealt with the racial issue and other

issues bringing the districts together. Since then, subsequent workshops and meetings have been conducted in the Princeton District.

A Title IV grant issued under the Civil Rights Act was received by the Princeton District. The first year of this grant, two human relations specialists were employed to direct inservice activities for the staff; to counsel with the staff on a continuing basis; and to bring in outside sources of aid that would make the transition most effective. Many white staff members had not worked with black children and black staff members had not worked with white children. Some teachers had not worked with children who were from extremely low economic living conditions. The necessity of bringing about human understanding and building a positive self-image in students was extremely important. For the 1971-72 school year the Title IV program has been changed to provide a person to work in the high school, one in the junior high and one in the intermediate school under the leadership of an advisory specialist. The goal this year is to work through task forces with staff members, students, and the administration in each building to make sure that all students have equal educational opportunity and to counsel the staff on many problems related to this task.

Special inservice programs were conducted for teachers in the buildings most affected by the change as well as all other buildings in the district.

Inservice programs were also provided for bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, cooks, paraprofessionals and any others working in these buildings.

New black administrators were placed in positions of responsibility in many places in the district.

Black men were named as head coaches in three of the ten major sports and other black coaches were added as assistants and directors of various programs.

There is a continuous involvement of staff in reassessing the program with specific task forces of staff members in the areas of curriculum, pupil services, inservice programs, budget, school facilities and development funds.

Human relations task force committees, composed of students, faculty members and administrators, were established in both the high and junior high schools.

Involving Students

A day camp was conducted during the summer on the high school campus for Lincoln Heights and Princeton students in grades 7, 8 and 9.

A "buddy" system was set up in which black and white students were paired as buddies in hopes that each could become better acquainted with the other and give information that would be helpful to one another.

All fifth grade students in the district went on a week's camping program during the month of September.

A full summer school program was maintained for students of the combined district.

Coaches and directors of all student activities met with interested students to let them know all ramifications of student participation. This included music, debate, speech, drama, journalism, creative writing and athletics. Most of the students of the two high schools were involved.

There have been many student seminars and discussion sessions for black and white students to participate in open discussions of their common concerns.

There has been a clarification of all awards given to students and all rules in connection with them published for everyone to see.

The student council and other student groups were brought together for open discussions among themselves and with administrators, members of the Board of Education and advisors from the community.

Black and white students serve as members of the Superintendent's Advisory Committee

and students serve as members of the advisory councils established in each elementary school in the Princeton School District.

Involving Citizens

The members of the Princeton Board of Education, the superintendent, and most of the administrative staff held open meetings every Monday night in some community of the school district during the fall of 1970. All citizens of the district were invited to these meetings and there were open discussions on any questions they wished to raise.

The Superintendent's Breakfast has been held in each attendance area on Saturday mornings each year for several years. This has been continued and everyone in the area is invited to come to breakfast with the superintendent and his staff to discuss any matters pertaining to the district.

Mayors and other village and city officials, as well as the police chiefs, from the various municipalities have been together several times to talk about the schools.

An Industrial Advisory Committee was appointed and the members meet regularly with school officials.

There are adult education programs and community councils established in all communities and an Advisory Committee to the Superintendent meets regularly.

The Princeton PTA Council has held teas, presented dramas, and sponsored a variety of activities to strengthen communication between the black and white communities.

The PTA's of the district are strong and have had many exchange programs with black and white communities meeting together on an exchange basis.

A "Hot Line" telephone was set up and manned by PTA leaders urging citizens of the community to call to check rumors or seek information.

The ministers, through the Pulpit Exchange Program, have extended the earnest efforts of their congregations in the area of human relations and brotherhood.

"Kaffeeklatsches" and many small group meetings have been held where people could discuss the schools and the integration process.

Academic and arts festivals have been conducted during the year, which have directed into the high school more than 10,000 people from the entire community, to see the work of the students and participate in the many kinds of adult and student activities that have helped with intercultural understanding.

Changes in Policy and Program

There were many board and administrative policy changes given immediate consideration. These included such areas as grouping, grading, special education, health services, social services and others. Many curricular changes are also being made. In fact, every area in the school program is being looked at in light of the new needs of the student make-up in the Princeton Schools. Motivational laboratories were established in reading and mathematics in several buildings; learning centers were opened in all buildings; curriculum guides are being written as a result of careful consideration of each of the goals of the curriculum. For example, the high school English program is now a series of elective "mini-courses." Music, art and physical education programs have been expanded to include all Lincoln Heights youngsters from first grade up; additional paraprofessionals have been employed to work with individuals in the instructional program and a number of students are being used as tutors; a volunteer group of parents has been trained and is assisting teachers in the various schools.

Princeton has joined the Hamilton County Joint Vocational School District which will provide at least 65 more vocational areas.

The educational program has been expanded to include basic adult education; evening school classes with a broad listing of courses both credit and non-credit; special

classes for pregnant teenage girls; programmed instruction for high school youngsters; infant care center for parents of the district; preschool education program; and a broad community education program that had a participation of more than 13,000 people last year.

All students of the district benefited from the implementation of an improved counselor-student ratio. To assure the success of this change, an individualized instructional program for potential dropouts was implemented. The use of federal funds has been carefully scrutinized to maximize educational impact.

Facilities

There have been many changes in the facilities. Church property was purchased to house an overflow of 250 students when a strike on our construction site made it impossible to get into our new buildings.

An architectural firm and an educational consultant firm were employed to make a study for planning additions to the junior high and high school buildings. The Board has done extensive remodeling of the former Lincoln Heights schools; and has now built an addition to the junior high school.

The first phase of a 3000 pupil intermediate school, designed to bring together all students in grades four through six, has been completed. Many other buildings have also been remodeled.

So far, the merger has gone extremely well. There are a few key things that no doubt have had much to do with it. *First,* there is a great pride on the part of the people in the Princeton area in their schools and a desire on their part to have the best. There is also pride in each community and a willingness to encourage people to be different. *Second,* there has been a great involvement of people at all levels, from students to senior citizens. *Third,* the Board of Education and administration have been firm in their commitment and have not wavered, no matter how strong the opposition. *Next,* there has been considerable openness on the part of the people to share their feelings about education. The faculty of the school district is and always has been outstanding, one that has stood firm. *Finally,* the Ohio State Department of Education, and especially the office of Dr. Robert O. Greer, Assistant Superintendent of Urban Education, has been most helpful in giving us inservice help, in assisting us to get additional funds, in counseling and in encouraging us in our attempts to assure the success of the merger. There has also been strong support from the Justice Department, mass media and hundreds of others, officially and unofficially.

Most important of all, the majority of the things that have been done are not new to the people of the Princeton District, for Princeton has been promoting change, revising programs and communicating with people every day since the district was first organized.

While it is true that the merger of the two districts has gone well so far, most of us who are school administrators realize that we have taken only the first steps in desegregating the schools. Many of our staff members, students and people in the community are not yet sold on desegregated education. We have really only started to do some things that will improve the educational program for the Lincoln Heights students. It will take far more dedication, money, planning and intense effort to get the job done.

Some of our most critical needs are as follows:

1. A massive staff development program for both the professional and operational staffs. We need money to provide leadership on a continuous basis in the buildings, to free teachers for inservice work, and to enable administrators to study every aspect of education, to work in human relations and to discover ways to bring about change. We need help from the State Department of Education and the U. S. Office of Education in providing leadership

and money. There needs to be a restructuring of the training program in all of the colleges and universities across the country. Behavior modification is essential if we are going to deal with integration as it should be done. Commitment and leadership must be provided by the college and university instructors themselves who are responsible for helping educate staff members for tomorrow's schools.

2. There is need for money and staff to research and evaluate present programs. Has the academic achievement level of students been improved? Have we changed attitudes regarding peoples of different backgrounds? What programs seem to make a difference? The local school system has to put all of its money into cutting down pupil-teacher ratios and providing special services to the place where it does not have the money or staff to properly monitor programs and evaluate results.

3. More money is required for compensatory education programs. It is necessary to have a lower pupil-teacher ratio; to establish learning centers and mathematics and reading laboratories; to provide part-time work for some students to keep them in school; and to provide the special kinds of health counseling and psychological services necessary to keep disadvantaged children in school and working to their capacity.

4. Far more money needs to be put into preventive measures to stop the continuing increase in numbers of disadvantaged youngsters. Some of the kinds of programs that seem to make a difference are early childhood education, parent education, full day kindergarten, community education that involves black and white parents together in studying and working on problems and projects of mutual interest, the use of television in such programs as "Sesame Street" and interracial outdoor education and camping programs that go far beyond anything communities are doing at the present time.

We have been asked many times what affect we felt the merger was having on the Princeton Schools. The following are some of our observations:

Academically the achievement of white children in the district has not been affected by the transfer. In the area of human relations, understanding of cultural differences and learning to live and work with others, both black and white students have benefited.

As the percentage of black students has increased from 12 to 28 percent, there have been better student relations because there is less black isolation. Black students are in all classes and activities, thus, there is opportunity for more communication between races.

There has been greater staff stimulation. The merging of two districts would be stimulating in itself, but with the addition of the racial and economic differences that exist in this merger, it brings out the best in all as staff and community leaders try to meet the new challenges. It has stimulated a move toward more individualized instruction, team teaching, use of greater variety of teaching materials, and better communication among all of us.

As a result of the merger, Princeton athletic teams have improved and many of the activities and clubs have taken on new enthusiasm.

The merger has opened the opportunity for the American dream to come true for blacks and whites alike, for America throughout its history has been a melting pot of many people struggling together for personal achievement that leads to the greatest good for all.

As superintendent, the merger has created the necessity for one to look more carefully at himself, his own hopes, feelings, and aspirations. One sees the necessity for open communication, personal stability, honesty and sincerity in dealing with people. One realizes also that his only security comes from within himself and his solid belief in divine guidance.

Princeton will go through many troubled times but the spirit of Princeton will move on to higher and better educational and human goals because of the sincere dedication and commitment of many individuals and groups to provide high quality education and equal opportunity for all.